**Yridia system**

**Just jumped into hyperspace above Yridia IX**

**Heading for Castle Tarentum on Yridia II**

Tahiri Drakon Night-Thorn was on her way back from Eden city on Yridia IX, when an urgent holo message came through on the summit channel. As Tahiri read the message she grew a bit concerned. It was a personal summons from the Consul of Tarentum, Sith Bloodfyre-Tarentae. She wondered what the meeting could be about, especially since it was at Castle Tarentum, and the message did say to be there as soon as possible. *Well, was heading back to the Castle anyways. Oh boy, hopefully this doesn’t take too long, my list of things to do as Aedile is getting longer. Chiefly, I need to restart the work at re establishing the defenses of the underwater fortress.* The war had stalled the work, though luckily there had been no more attacks from the Quarren, or any attacks from the Collective. Now this summons, though not to be taken lightly especially coming straight from the Consul himself. *What on Dathomir, is going on? Force willing, hopefully the Consul is not angry with me or Thanadd!?* She thought to herself as she commanded her RX pilot droid, Max, to get to Yridia as fast as the Star Courier shuttle could go. Sitting back in her chair and sighing, Tahiri’s hand slipped down onto the top of Solan’s silky forehead and absentmindedly began to stroke his forehead. The Akul didn’t move and simply gave a soft purr-growl in response to the gentle caress.

Two hours later, Max announced that they would be exiting hyperspace in a few moments. Tahiri looked up from the data pad she had been writing on, just in time to watch the last of the hyperspace tube of stars dissipate. The blue planet that was Yridia II, took up a good portion of the main view port. However, out of the corner of her eye, Tahiri caught the slight black shimmer through one of the starboard side view ports. Before she had a chance to ask if there were other ships in the vicinity, Max declared that the Venator-class Star Destroyer ***Affliction*** was in orbit. “Hmmm that’s the ship Grandmaster Hades is in command of, wonder what he’s doing here,” Tahiri mumbled to herself, as she craned her neck enough to catch a better view of the Star Destroyer. *Always did like the shape of Star Destroy…* Max interrupted her thoughts, as the command center was asking for her authorization code. Tahiri waved her approval for Max to enter it, as she stood, “Max, let me know when we are going to land, I need to freshen up a bit.”

“Yes, mama,” replied Max.

Once the Star Courier had landed in the main bay of the underwater castle, Tahiri punched the ramps access button, and quickly departed the ship. At the bottom of the ramp, several guards were waiting to escort her to the meeting. Tahiri inquired if there was anyone else who had not arrived for the meeting. She was informed that she was the last to arrive, as everyone else was already there. *Well, that’s a really great impression,* she silently and sarcastically berated herself. Moments later, in Castle Tarentum’s great hall, Tahiri knelt before the Consul of Tarentum, along with two others, Commander Ranarr Kul and Warlord Farrin Xies. Standing to either side of the Consul, were a few others, Hades being one of them, and Thanadd was there as well.  Consul Sith Bloodfyre-Tarentae looked down at them, silently assessing each person in turn.

Tahiri could physically feel the Dark side presence surrounding the Consul, as he finally spoke. “I’ll be keeping this meeting short, as we all have tasks that we need to get back to. I am quite happy that all three of you were able to meet me here. Quite ironic really, what better a place to grant the Heir of Tarentum title, then here where the seat of Tarentum’s power sits.”

The tall Shaevalian paused for a moment, as he pulled back his hood. Tahiri froze in place with amazement, her previously calmed mind was now in a whirl of thoughts and emotions. She furiously fought the urge to jump up and hug the Consul, with that thought alone helped her calm herself a bit. She could feel both the Human and Cathar beside her, rapidly suck in a breath themselves. Tahiri even heard a quick intake of breath from the rest in the room. She didn’t know how, but all three of them managed to stay still and looked up at the Consul.   
“Warlord Farrin Xies, Commander Ranarr Kul, Warrior Tahiri Drakon Night-Thorn,” the Consul carefully said each of their names. “And assembled Tarenti and Tarentae. I have called all of you here today to witness these three new Tarentae. Each of you, Farrin, Ranarr, and Tahiri have each showed your dedication to this clan in different ways. Two of you have been here for a while, constantly helping me grow this clan. Tahiri, as Aedile of House Mortis, you have proven to be quite an energetic and helpful partner to Thanadd. And from what else I’ve heard about you, no doubt you will rise to further endeavors.” After a brief pause, Master Sith Bloodfyre-Tarentae continued, “Before you all rise I have another award to bestow upon Ranarr and Tahiri.” Sith looked over the rest of the room before announcing.

Tahiri and Ranarr shared a slight glance at one another, before locking their eyes back to their Consul. “Congratulations and a thanks to the both of you for all of your hard and dedicated work within Tarentum. Now arise Lieutenant Colonel Ranarr Kul. Arise Battlemaster Tahiri Drakon Night-Thorn. I welcome you as Tarentae.”

Tahiri was thrown hard against the back of her seat, stars exploding inside her eyelids for a moment. Quickly she pulled herself around the back of the chair and sat down as she felt the concussion blast from the explosion rock her ship again. Tahiri barely got the straps around her before she was thrown to the sideways. “Get us out of here Max!!” she screamed at her droid pilot. “I heard you the first-time mistress. I am doing my best to navigate out of the range of the attacking forces so that we ourselves don’t get blown out of the water,” exclaimed the indignant droid. “Do whatever you have to, but get us out of here!!” Hearing a whine from behind, she swiveled the chair around to get a better look. There huddled in the corner, was her full grown Akul, Solan. Tahiri opened herself through the Force to her companion, to comfort and consul him. However, in doing so, she also felt the intense wave of other creatures, within the radius of the Castle, as she could almost literally feel everything feeling they were going through. *Pain. Fear. Sadness. Confusion. DEATH.* Solan whimpered and growled as he too sensed the creatures through his connection to her. Shaking her head, to clear her mind and focus on calming Solan. The Akul calmed for a bit, comforted by her presence and words.

Even as another concussive wave hit her ship, she kept full eye contact with Solan, willing both herself and him to stay calm. Tahiri felt the pressure around the craft ease off. “Are we in the air now, Max?”

“Yes mistress. Coordinates are set and I am ready to punch it on your command, once we are out of the atmosphere,” replied Max.

“Any sign of pursuit?” Tahiri took a slow breath in, awaiting the answer.

After a few tense moments, the pilot droid announced, “No mama, no sign of any pursuit. It looks like those people are focusing on the Castle and surrounding water.”

*I just hope that most of everyone got out.* Tahiri brain clicked, “Max, are we still in range for scanning any of the ships?” She could hear the audible whirls and clicks as Max checked the instruments.

“Yes, we are still in range.” reported the droid. “Which would make quite easy for them to detect us, if they are currently scanni…”

“Good, slow down and scan those ships,” Tahiri interrupted as she unbuckled and got up from her chair.

“What?! SLOW DOWN? Mistress, did you bang your head while climbing on board, cause that is just crazy talk!” exclaimed Max.

“I’ll just pretend I didn’t hear that last remark, Max,” Tahiri growled slightly as she came up behind the droid. “Just do as I command, and scan those ships. I want to know, who in the karking world attacked the castle! If we do get spotted…” she paused for a moment. Then continued with renewed anger in her voice. “Then so be it. Just so long as we get scans and then are able to send it out, either to warn the rest of the system or let the brotherhood know what happened.”

Minutes passed by with what felt like an eternity, as Max carefully ran scan after scan of the ships firing upon the Castle, while still keeping a fair amount of distance in between. Tahiri watched as the results readings came back, one familiar hit at a time. Her heart sank slightly as each class of ship was identified, and then the fire within her rose to new heights as she recognized the symbol each ship had emblazoned on their hulls. “The Collective,” Tahiri spat.